

Fiber Connect – Town of Egremont Agreement April 26, 2021

April 26, 2021 at Egremont Town Hall. This morning Egremont Select Board members George McGurn, Mary Brazie, and Lucinda Vermuelen, and Fiber Connect CEO Adam Chait signed the FC-Town *Broadband Fiber Network Construction and Operation Services Agreement*, which spells out the terms of FC's work to extend Internet service to the remaining unserved areas of Egremont. This follows the signing of the Grant Award Agreement between FC and the Massachusetts Broadband Institute on April 14, which was a prerequisite to signing the FC-Town agreement. The signing event was held outside Town Hall in compliance with Town Covid protocols and was also attended by Egremont Technology Committee Co-Chairs Jeff Lazarus and Rolfe Tessem.

One of the provisions of the FC-Town agreement is that FC will offer a 50% promotional discount on installation charges to all Egremont residents regardless of location within the Town—even locations already cabled—who sign up within six months of the effective date of the agreement (today!). The discount also applies to any residents in the unserved areas who sign up prior to construction passing their homes even if such construction takes place after six months from the effective date of the agreement. Currently, the published FC residential installation charge is \$999; the promotional charge will be \$499.

For customers in existing service areas who sign up under the promotional terms, installation will be done in "batches" for efficiency, meaning that actual connection may be held up until there are enough customers in a specific area to make it feasible to send an installation crew at the reduced price. All questions about FC services and pricing should be directed to FC at sales@bfcma.com or 413-429-4109. The Town has no further information about FC pricing other than what is available from FC.

The FC-Town agreement had been approved by all parties in December but had to await signing until details of the FC-MBI grant agreement were finalized. The FC-MBI agreement covers the state grant that will pay for the network construction costs. There is no cost to the Town.

Notwithstanding the timing gap, however, FC has been hard at work on the project in anticipation of today's signing. They have already completed most of the design and engineering functions and have already submitted all utility pole license applications. In fact, they have already received most of the "make-ready" estimates back from National Grid and Verizon. Make-ready is a utility company process to bring their poles into regulatory and code compliance (where needed) and prepare them for attachment of FC's cables. Timing of make-ready work is controlled entirely by the utility companies and generally can take up to six months, sometimes more.

State permits are required in areas where cabling must cross state property, which in our case primarily affects access to residents on Brookvale and Hilltop Roads in South Egremont. FC has already initiated the permitting process. Although this is a matter between FC and the state, the Town will help in any way it can to expedite the process. We do not yet have a timeline for this.